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DEPARTMENT FOR H, S/CT, AND ARA/BSC

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PTER, OREP, AR
SUBJECT: STAFFDEL MACKAY FACT-FINDING ON AMIA
- AND COUNTERTERRORISM ISSUES IN ARGENTINA

1. (U) SUMMARY: IN MEETINGS JAN 22 - 26 WITH GOA
OFFICIALS, THE JUDICIARY, JEWISH GROUPS, THE ISRAELI
EMBASSY, AND PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES POLICE, HOUSE
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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS JOHN

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MACKEY AND DENNIS MCDONOUGH UNDERSCORED CONTINUING INTEREST BY THE COMMITTEE IN SEEING PROGRESS IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE JULY 1994 BOMBING OF THE ARGENTINE JEWISH CULTURAL CENTER (AMIA). THE VISITORS CAME AWAY FROM THE MEETINGS WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT INVESTIGATING JUDGE JUAN JOSE GALEANO WAS DEDICATED TO HIS TASK AND RECEIVING MODERATELY MORE SUPPORT FROM THE GOA THAN PREVIOUSLY, BUT MOST INTERLOCUTORS WERE SKEPTICAL THAT THE JUDGE COULD RESOLVE THE CASE ENTIRELY UNLESS SUBSTANTIALLY MORE EFFORT WERE MADE.

2. (U) THE STAFFDEL EXPLORED INTEREST FOR USG TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN MAKING THE OFFER OF A REWARD FOR INFORMATION IN THE AMIA AND 1992 ISRAELI EMBASSY BOMBINGS MORE WIDELY PUBLICIZED. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES POLICE AND CIVILIAN SECURITY OFFICIALS, MR. MACKEY MADE CLEAR THE COMMITTEE'S CONCERN THAT THE NEW POLICE LEADERSHIP MAKE A GENUINE COMMITMENT TO COOPERATING AT ALL LEVELS WITH THE JUDGE'S INVESTIGATION (REPORTED SEPTTEL). THE STAFFDEL VISITED THE ARGENTINE PORTION OF THE SO-CALLED "TRIPLE FRONTIER" AREA ON THE BORDER WITH PARAGUAY AND BRAZIL TO SEE WHAT STEPS WERE UNDERWAY TO IMPROVE MIGRATION CONTROLS IN A REGION KNOWN TO HARBOR INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN TRANSNATIONAL CRIME AND TERRORISM. IN ADDITION, THE STAFFDEL PAID CALLS ON REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE DEFENSE MINISTRY, WHERE THE PRINCIPAL THEMES WERE BILATERAL RELATIONS, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS, INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION TRAINING (IMET), AND TRANSFERS OF EXCESS DEFENSE ARTICLES (EDA). MR.

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MCDONOUGH ALSO MET WITH ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERS ON TRADE AND ECONOMIC THEMES IMPORTANT TO THE COMMITTEE. END SUMMARY.

AMIA AND TERRORISM

3. (U) IN A DENSELY PACKED PROGRAM FROM JANUARY 22 TO 26, HOUSE IRC STAFF MEMBERS JOHN MACKEY AND DENNIS

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MCDONOUGH GATHERED FACTS ON PROGRESS IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE AMIA BOMBING AND OTHER TERRORISM-RELATED ISSUES. THE VISIT SERVED PRINCIPALLY AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE COMMITTEE'S SEPTEMBER 1995 HEARINGS ON AMIA, AND THE STAFFDEL MET WITH A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD GIVEN TESTIMONY TO THOSE HEARINGS. THE STAFFDEL MADE CLEAR IN ALL MEETINGS THAT THE COMMITTEE HAD NOT YET MADE ANY DECISION ON THE USEFULNESS OF HOLDING ADDITIONAL HEARINGS.

4. (SBU) DURING DISCUSSIONS WITH FEDERAL JUDGE JUAN JOSE GALEANO AND MEMBERS OF THE VARIOUS GOA TEAMS ASSISTING IN HIS INVESTIGATION INTO THE AMIA CASE, THE STAFFDEL HEARD COMPREHENSIVE UPDATES ON ARRESTS AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE LAST IRC HEARINGS. JUDGE GALEANO REITERATED HIS LONG-STANDING VIEW THAT THE COURT'S INVESTIGATION WAS BEARING FRUIT, IF ONLY AT -- WHAT ASSUREDLY SEEMED TO OUTSIDERS -- A SNAIL'S PACE. NO HYPOTHESIS HAD YET BEEN COMPLETELY DISCARDED, AND GALEANO WAS CONVINCED SEVERAL LINES OF INQUIRY WERE VERY PROMISING. AS HAS BEEN THE CASE IN MANY INVESTIGATIONS

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OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM, A LOT OF RELEVANT INFORMATION DERIVED FROM SENSITIVE SOURCES WAS NOT USEABLE IN OPEN COURT. THE NON-DISCLOSURE OF SUCH INFORMATION COMPOUNDED THE PERCEPTION AMONG MANY ARGENTINES AND INTERESTED FOREIGNERS THAT NO PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE. IN SUM, FROM GALEANO'S PERSPECTIVE THE CASE WAS NOT/NOT IN DANGER OR NEARING A DEAD END, BUT EXTREME CARE WOULD BE NEEDED TO BOTH GUARANTEE THE RIGHTS OF THE DETAINED INDIVIDUALS, PROTECT SENSITIVE INFORMATION, AND ENSURE JUSTICE WAS ACHIEVED.

5. (U) THE STAFFDEL TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERScore THE COMMITTEE'S ONGOING INTEREST IN BOLSTERING THE INVESTIGATION, AND IT BROACHED THE CONCEPT OF POSSIBLE U.S. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON SUCH THINGS AS THE GOA'S REWARD PROGRAM ON TERRORISM. GOA INTERLOCUTORS WERE RECEPTIVE TO THE IDEA OF EXPLORING SUCH ASSISTANCE. (POST WILL REPORT SEPTTEL ON IDEAS PROPOSED BY THE STAFFDEL.) THE STAFFDEL LATER MET WITH DR. EDUARDO DE

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- AND COUNTERTERRORISM ISSUES IN ARGENTINA

LAZZARI, SECRETARY FOR SECURITY OF THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS
AIRES, AND PROVINCIAL POLICE CHIEF ADOLFO HUGO VITELLI
(ALSO REPORTED SEPTTEL) TO UNDERLINE THE COMMITTEE'S
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DESIRE TO SEE A COMMITMENT BY THE PROVINCIAL SECURITY
LEADERSHIP TO FULL COOPERATION IN THE INVESTIGATION INTO
AMIA, ESPECIALLY IN THE WAKE OF THE ARRESTS LAST YEAR OF
OFFICERS CONNECTED WITH THE SALE OF THE STOLEN VAN USED
IN THE ATTACK.

6. (U) THE STAFFDEL MET WITH MANY LOCAL JEWISH GROUPS,
INCLUDING LEADERS FROM B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL, THE
AMIA, THE DELEGATION OF ARGENTINE JEWISH ASSOCIATIONS
(DAIA), THE SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER, AND "MEMORIA
ACTIVA," AN ORGANIZATION THAT INCLUDES MANY FAMILY
MEMBERS OF VICTIMS OF THE AMIA ATTACK AND WHICH IS
DEDICATED TO DEMANDING MORE RESPONSIVENESS FROM THE GOA.
USING A TECHNIQUE ADOPTED BY OTHER CITIZENS GROUPS, SUCH
AS THE FAMED "GRANDMOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO," THE
"MEMORIA ACTIVA" HOLDS WEEKLY RALLIES OUTSIDE THE MAIN
BUENOS AIRES COURTHOUSE. MANY NOTABLES FROM BOTH
ARGENTINA AND ABROAD HAVE SPOKEN AT THE MONDAY VIGILS
ORCHESTRATED BY THE GROUP, WHICH FREQUENTLY QUESTIONS THE
GOA'S POLITICAL WILL TO SOLVE THE CASE. LEADERS OF
"MEMORIA ACTIVA" PRESENTED STAFFDEL A LETTER REQUESTING
THAT PRESIDENT CLINTON CONSIDER A MEETING WITH THE GROUP
IF HE SHOULD VISIT ARGENTINA (FAXED TO S/CT, ORIGINAL
POUCHED TO ARA/BSC). HOWEVER, ALL GROUPS -- INCLUDING
THE LATTER -- WERE EXTREMELY COMPLIMENTARY ABOUT JUDGE
GALEANO'S DEDICATION TO THE INVESTIGATION; MOST FOUND
FAULT WITH OTHER PARTS OF GOVERNMENT APPARATUS,
ESPECIALLY WITH FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL POLICE
COOPERATION. MOST GROUPS THOUGHT THE IRC HEARINGS HELD
IN 1995 HAD BEEN A POSITIVE FACTOR IN SPURRING PROGRESS,

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INCLUDING THE ARRESTS OF SEVERAL PROVINCIAL POLICE LAST
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JULY. THAT SAID, THERE WAS NO CONSENSUS THAT ADDITIONAL
HEARINGS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE AT THE CURRENT JUNCTURE;
DR. RUBEN BERAJA, PRESIDENT OF THE DAIA AND DE FACTO
SPEAKER FOR THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE, VENTURED THAT
HEARINGS NOW WOULD RUN THE RISK OF REPEATING TOO MUCH,
WITH A RELATIVE SCARCITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS TO FOCUS
ON.

7. (SBU) TO COMPLEMENT THEIR WORK ON THE AMIA CASE, THE
STAFFDEL ALSO COVERED BROADER TERRORISM ISSUES. THEY
WERE BRIEFED BY ISRAELI AMBASSADOR ITZAK AVIRAN AND THE
ISRAELI DCM ON THAT EMBASSY'S THINKING ON BOTH THE AMIA
AND THE 1992 BOMBING OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY BUILDING.
AVIRAN UNDERSCORED HIS GOVERNMENT'S SKEPTICISM ON GOA
EFFORTS IN BOTH INVESTIGATIONS AND, REPEATING VIEWS HE
HAD EXPRESSED PUBLICLY LAST YEAR, EVINCED SPECIAL
FRUSTRATION WITH THE ARGENTINE SUPREME COURT'S "INEPT"
HANDLING OF THE EMBASSY BOMBING INVESTIGATION. THE
STAFFDEL ALSO MET WITH DR. LUIS SANTOS CASALE,
UNDERSECRETARY FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT IN THE INTERIOR
MINISTRY, TO HEAR ABOUT THE GOA EFFORTS TO BETTER
REGULATE BORDER TRAFFIC INTO ARGENTINA, PARTICULARLY AT
THE TRI-BORDER REGION WITH PARAGUAY AND BRAZIL. DR.
CASALE EMPHASIZED GOA COMMITMENT TO PUTTING IN PLACE
STATE-OF-THE-ART INFORMATION SYSTEMS. IN MARCH, DR.
CASALE WILL VISIT WASHINGTON AND OTHER PARTS OF THE U.S.
TO FORMULATE SPECIFICS ON A "SMART" BORDER CROSSING CARD
SYSTEM WHICH ALL THREE GOVERNMENTS HAVE AGREED TO ADOPT
AT THE TRI-BORDER. THE FOCUS WILL BE ON IDENTIFYING
FREQUENT CROSSERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE NOT CITIZENS
OF ANY OF THE THREE COUNTRIES, THUS MAKING A STAB AT

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IDENTIFYING GROUPS LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED IN TRANSNATIONAL
CRIME, INCLUDING TERRORISM AND ARMS TRAFFICKING. DR.
CASALE GENEROUSLY OFFERED TO HAVE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
POLICE AGENCIES REPRESENTED AT THE TRI-BORDER -- THE
GENDARMERIA (BORDER PATROL), PREFECTURA (COAST GUARD),
AND THE FEDERAL POLICE (PFA) -- ESCORT THE STAFFDEL IN
THEIR VISIT THERE ON JANUARY 25 - 26. (DUE TO BUDGET AND
STAFFING CONSTRAINTS, POST WAS UNABLE TO ACCOMPANY THE
STAFFDEL ON THAT PORTION OF THEIR VISIT.)

BILATERAL RELATIONS,
PKO AND THE MILITARY

8. (U) THE STAFFDEL MET WITH SEVERAL REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE DEFENSE MINISTRY
ON BROADER THEMES OF INTEREST TO THE IRC. WITH
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NORTH AMERICA OFFICE AT MFA,
DISCUSSIONS COVERED MANY IMPORTANT BILATERAL ISSUES, FROM

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TRADE AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY TO SECURITY COOPERATION
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL COMMONALITIES. THE STAFFDEL GAVE
MFA OFFICERS SOME INSIGHTS AS TO THE IRC'S CURRENT
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THINKING ON FUTURE HEARINGS AFFECTING ARGENTINE
INTERESTS. AT THE DEFENSE MINISTRY, TOPICS INCLUDED
INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS -- INCLUDING
ARGENTINA'S POSSIBLE UTILIZATION OF ITS PKO TRAINING
FACILITY FOR THE ACRF -- AND BILATERAL ISSUES SUCH AS
PARTICIPATION IN THE IMET PROGRAM AND AVAILABILITY OF
EXCESS DEFENSE ARTICLES FROM U.S. STOCKS.

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ECONOMIC THEMES

9. (U) IN ADDITION TO GENERAL BILATERAL ISSUES DISCUSSED WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, MR. MCDONOUGH MET WITH VARIOUS OFFICIALS AND PRIVATE SECTOR ECONOMISTS TO DISCUSS TRADE, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, IMF TARGETS, AND OTHER ECONOMIC ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE IRC. HIS GOVERNMENT INTERLOCUTORS INCLUDED GABRIEL LOPETEGUI, ADVISER IN THE ECONOMY MINISTRY FOR IMF MATTERS, DANIEL ROITER AND GUILLERMO MACLOUGHLIN, ECONOMY MINISTRY ADVISERS ON TRADE-RELATED ISSUES, AND JORGE PEREIRA, FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AMERICAN ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. MR. MCDONOUGH ALSO MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF "ESTUDIOS BRODA," THE ECONOMIC THINK TANK RUN BY FORMER MINISTER OF ECONOMY MIGUEL ANGEL BRODA.

GODARD

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